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Plotinus. The Essence and Descent of Soul.

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"OUR BIRTH IS BUT A SLEEP AND A FORGETTING."

THREE

Treatises of Plotinus

TRANSLATED FROM

The Original Greek,

BY

THOMAS M. JOHNSON.

MDCCCLXXX.
THE "SUN" BOOK AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE,
OSCEOLA, MISSOURI.

COMPLIMENTS OF
THOS. M. JOHNSON.

TWO BOOKS

ON THE ESSENCE OF SOUL

AND ONE

ON THE DESCENT OF SOUL.

Translated from the Original Greek of Plotinus

BY

THOMAS M. JOHNSON.

. . . . . "*Arise and fly*
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die."

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~ B

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DEDICATION.

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED TO

A. BRONSON ALCOTT,

ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST OF

"*Heaven's exiles straying from the orb of light*,"

AS A TOKEN OF THE RESPECT AND ESTEEM ENTERTAINED FOR HIM BY THE

TRANSLATOR.

PRELIMINARY.

This pamphlet is published as a "specimen" of an English version of the entire writings of Plotinus, which I am now making, and which I propose to finish as soon as possible. I am satisfied that one of the greatest boons which can be conferred on this and future generations is an English translation of Plotinus, undoubtedly one of the profoundest philosophers that ever energized within the World of Sense. His influence during the period of his mundane existence was extensive and predominant, and practically shaped the truly intellectual speculations of the third and immediately subsequent centuries. Eunapius, writing in the fourth century, says that "the public places are now the altars of Plotinus, and his books are not only in the hands of those skilled in the Platonic doctrines, but even if the multitude incidentally and superficially refer to a philosophic dogma it will prove to be of Plotinian origin." After his return to the Intelligible World, whence he came, his immortal writings circulated and expounded by his numerous and able disciples, who constituted the golden chain of the Platonic succession, were productive of incalculable benefit to the philosophic class of mankind, until a brutal, barbarous edict closed the School of Philosophy at Athens and thereby struck from the intellectual firmament the only luminary that remained of a once brilliant galaxy. The names of Plotinus and other philosophic heroes sunk into obscurity and were only mentioned to be ignorantly abused and calumniated.

In 1758 there descended into this sensible sphere a divine soul whose worldly name was Thomas Taylor, commonly known by way of distinction as the "Platonist." This wonderful genius and profound philosopher devoted his whole life to the elucidation and propagation of the Platonic philosophy. By his arduous labors modern times became acquainted with

many of the works of Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, etc., etc. Since Taylor's time something has been known of Plotinus, but he is still to many a mere name. They are ignorant of the nature and excellence of his philosophy (the Platonic), and to them his writings are truly "sealed books." It is to be sincerely hoped that this *brochure* will be the means of directing the attention of the "discerning few" to a most admirable and recondite philosopher who has been aptly termed a "resuscitated Plato." In this materialistic age, especially, his works ought to be known, read and pondered. The tendency of this age is to grovel—to deify matter. The investigation of material causes and facts is absurdly denominated "Science"! It is ridiculously believed by the multitude, philosophasters included, that all things can be apprehended by sense; that aside from matter nothing exists, and that such words as "intellect," "thought," and "soul" are meaningless and mere figments of the imagination.

There were materialists in the days of Plato and Plotinus, and they were wondrously like the herd of sensualists that flourish in this latter half of the 19th century. These men have never emerged from the cavern of Sense, and are no more qualified to express an opinion on a purely intellectual or spiritual subject than a Hottentot. How can persons discuss intelligently the nature of "intellect" who lack the capacity to apprehend the existence of anything superior to, or other than, matter? But enough of such intellectual pigmies!

The Platonic Philosophy is essentially spiritual, anagogic, intuitional. It perpetually aspires. It has for its chief objects the release of the immortal Soul from the bonds of matter and sense, and its union with Universal Divinity. "For the end and scope with Plotinus consisted in approximating and being united to the Supreme God" (Porphyry). "Nevertheless the endeavor is not to be [only] without sin, but to be a god [i. e., a god according to a similitude to Divinity itself] (Plot., En. 1., Lib. 2. 6). I have not space sufficient to give even a general outline of the Platonic or Plotinian system. Those philosophically inclined are referred to the works of Plato and

his genuine expositors, chief among whom is Plotinus. It must be carefully remembered, however, that every one is not competent to read and thoroughly comprehend the writings of Plotinus. They are by no means adapted, like many of the popular scientific and educational publications of to-day, to the "meanest capacities." They cannot be understood at first sight, without thought or previous preliminary study. They are written from the plane of the Universal. The author displays the utmost reluctance to descend, even temporarily, to the consideration of particulars. While they are truly "vocal to the intelligent," they will doubtless be incomprehensible to those immersed in sense and whose intellectual eye is blind. "To men indeed who make the study of words their sole employment, and the pursuit of wisdom but at best a secondary thing, who expect to be wise by desultory application for an hour or two in a day, after the fatigues of business, after mixing with the base multitude of mankind, laughing with the gay, affecting airs of gravity with the serious, tacitly assenting to every man's opinion, however absurd, and winking at folly however shameful and base—to such as these—and, alas! the world is full of such — the sublimest truths must appear to be nothing more than jargon and reverie, the dreams of a distempered imagination, or the ebullitions of fanatical faith. But all this is by no means wonderful, if we consider that two-fold ignorance is the disease of *the many*. For they are not only ignorant with respect to the sublimest knowledge, but they are even ignorant of their ignorance. Hence they never suspect their want of understanding; but immediately reject a doctrine which appears at first sight absurd, because it is too splendid for their bat-like eyes to behold." "Let no one therefore deceive himself by fancying that he can understand the writings of Plotinus by barely reading them. For, as the subjects which he discusses are for the most part the objects of intellect alone, to understand them is to see them, and to see them is to come into contact with them. But this is only to be accomplished by long familiarity with, and a life conformable to the things themselves. For then, as Plato says, "a light as if leaping

from a fire will on a sudden be enkindled in the soul, and will then itself nourish itself." (7th epistle)."

The three treatises in this pamphlet discuss matters of the greatest importance to thinkers, and in fact, to all mankind. The two on the "Essence of the Soul" are deeply interesting and contain some profound insights into this recondite subject. The one on the "Descent of the Soul" is a very subtile and abstruse investigation of the causes which induce the soul to descend from on high and enter the Sphere of Sense. The first treatise which, though complete in itself, is probably a fragment of a larger work, has never before appeared in English. Versions of the other two—that of the work on the "Descent of the Soul" being extremely paraphrastic—were published by Thomas Taylor. That on the "Essence of the Soul" is tolerably close, and, after a strict revision, has been adopted by me. The present translation has been made as literal as was consistent with perspicuousness and the idioms of the two languages. Plotinus is a peculiarly difficult author to render into English. He has been justly termed "one of the most obscure authors in any language." This obscurity is twofold; arising from both the brevity and complexity of his sentences, and the profundity of his conceptions. Occasionally, for the purpose of elucidating the text, words and phrases have been introduced, inclosed in brackets, not found in the original.

I have used and consulted the three following editions of Plotinus: 1. The Oxford, in 3 vols., 4to, 1835, edited by the celebrated Creuzer. It has the Latin version and annotations of Marsilius Ficinus, and though the punctuation of the Greek text is bad is, taken all in all, the most valuable and useful edition of Plotinus that there is. 2. The Paris, Gr. et Lat., 1 vol, 4to, 1855, edited also by Creuzer. 3. The Leipsic, Gr. only, 2 vols., 8vo, 1856, edited by A. Kirchhoff. This is a very convenient and excellently printed edition, and gives about the best text of any. It has neither notes nor annotations.

A sketch of the principal events in the life of Plotinus is annexed.

THOMAS M. JOHNSON.

OSCEOLA, MO., September 9, 1880.

Biographical Sketch of Plotinus.

A. D.

205 Descended into the World of Sense, at Lycopolis in Egypt.

232 Began to hear the philosophical lectures of Ammonius Saccas, at Alexandria.

243 Accompanied the Emperor Gordianus on his expedition to Persia for the purpose of studying the philosophy of the Persians, and the wisdom of the Indian sages.

244 After the murder of Gordianus in Mesopotamia, he fled to Antioch, and thence went to Rome.

252 He began to write—to "give the world a copy of his inimitable mind."

262 A pestilence raged at Rome, which attacked him, and ultimately caused his release from the body.

263 Porphyry became his disciple. At this time Plotinus had written twenty-one books. He had also requested the Emperor to give him a ruined city in Campania, which he intended to rebuild, populate it with those devoted to Philosophy, name it Platonopolis, and govern it by the laws of Plato.

268 Porphyry went to Sicily. Plotinus had by this time written twenty-four more works.

269 He sent to Porphyry nine additional books. He left Rome and went to Campania.

270 His soul being liberated from the corporeal bonds, he ascended into the Intelligible world. His last words were: "Let my divine nature return to the Universal Divinity."

ON THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL.

(Lib. 1., Enn. 4.)

In the Intelligible World is true being of which Intellect is the essence. Souls are (naturally) there, and thence descend into the sphere of Sense. In the Intelligible World souls are destitute of bodies—in the region of Sense they are in, and divided by, bodies. *There* every intellect is united, neither divided nor differentiated; likewise all souls are (there) united in one World, nor do they experience local separation. Intellect, therefore, is always undivided and impartible—and Soul there (in the supersensuous place) is impartible and indivisible, though it possesses a partible nature. For psychical partibility is a departure from Intelligibles and a generation in bodies; wherefore Soul is reasonably said to be divisible about bodies, since it is thus apart from the Intelligible World. How, then, is it impartible? The fact is that the whole of the soul does not descend into Sense, but a part of it, which is from its nature [totally] indivisible, remains on high. In the Timæus it is said that the soul is constituted from an impartible essence and an essence divisible about bodies, which signifies that the soul dwells partly amidst superior, and partly amidst inferior, natures; attached to the former [i. e., the Intelligible World], and at the same time proceeding thence to the latter [i. e., the World of Sense]—just as a line flows from the centre of a circle to its circumference. Despite its descent to the sensuous plane it still recognizes its relationship to the part on high, and preserves the nature of the whole soul, for its partibility here is merely as it were temporary, and it is in reality impartible. For extending itself to total body, though not divided in it, the whole soul is said to be divided into the universal whole.

ON THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL.

(Lib. 8., Enn. 4.)

I. Often when thoroughly converted to myself, being totally abstracted from the body, exempt from other things, and concentrated within myself, I behold a most wonderful beauty, and indubitably believe that I possess a supersensuous allotment, since I then energize according to the best life; am unified with Divinity—and, being posited in it, attain an energy which elevates me beyond every other intelligible. However, after this unification with, and establishment in, the Divine Nature, lapsing from Intellect into the discursive energy of reason, I am perplexed as to how I previously and now descended; and how my soul entered the body, being such as it really is in its essence, though abiding in body. Heraclitus, who exhorts us to investigate this descent, placing necessary mutations from contraries, and a path upwards and downwards, says that it rests in this activity—intimating that great weariness results from continually laboring in the same thing. As he seems to indicate the mode of descent through a similitude, and neglects to remove the obscurity, perhaps we should again inquire of him by what method he obtained the object of his investigation. Empedocles, when he announces that there is a law ordaining that criminal souls shall lapse into this World of Sense, and when he says of himself—

> "I fled from Deity and heavenly light,
> To serve mad Discord in the realms of Night—"

reveals as much as Pythagoras and his disciples have enigmatically disclosed concerning this subject, and also many others. Moreover, Empedocles is particularly obscure through having poetically expressed himself.

The Divine Plato remains who has written many beautiful things about the soul, and discoursed frequently of its descent, so that we may hope to receive from him some definite information. What, then, does this philosopher say? APPARENTLY he does not everywhere assert the same, and therefore his opinion is not perceptible to all. Primarily, he universally contemns the World of Sense, and reprobates the connexion of the soul with body—maintaining that it is in bonds, and buried in body. He likewise endorses the dogma—delivered in the arcana of the Mysteries—that the soul is incarcerated in this life as in a prison. Again, a cave with Plato, as with Empedocles, it appears to me, signified this sensible universe. And he says that a release from these chains, and an ascent from this cavern, is a progression of the soul to the Intelligible Sphere. In the Phædrus he states that a defluxion of the wings is the cause of the Soul's descent; and that after its ascent certain psychical revolutions again bring the Soul hither. Through decrees, lots, fortunes, and punishments other souls lapse; and in all these he censures the intercourse of the Soul with the body. In the Timæus, however, speaking about the Universe, he praises the World, proclaims it a blessed Divinity, and says that Soul was imparted to the Universe, by a beneficent Fabricator—since it is necessary that it should be intellectual and it cannot be so without Soul. Wherefore Divinity gave Soul to the Universe, and our individual souls were sent hither to contribute to the perfection of the Whole, as it is necessary that this World of Sense should have as many and similar genera of animals as are in the Intelligible Sphere.

II. If we wish to learn anything from Plato concerning our individual soul it will be requisite, [1], to investigate Soul itself, and how it became associated with body; [2], what should be enunciated about the nature of the World, in which Soul abides and controls — either voluntarily, or by necessity, or in some other mode; [3], we must inquire concerning the Fabricator of these things; whether he acts rightly or as our souls which are perhaps compelled, while governing inferior bodies, to thoroughly comprehend their

essence, if they desire to entirely subjugate them — since each body is dissipable and seeks its own place — but in the Universe all things naturally remain where they properly belong. Moreover, our bodies need much care, being exposed to alien influences, are indigent of many things, and require every assistance as they are circumstanced by many dangers. The body of the world, on the contrary, being perfect and self-sufficient, and not experiencing anything unnatural, is easily governed, and always accords with the will of its Soul. Neither is it excited by desire, nor disturbed by anything else, since nothing departs from, or accedes to, it. Hence Plato says that our souls, when perfectly co-ordinated with the Universal Soul, will be similarly perfect, reign on high, and govern the whole World. Since, when they are not absent nor profoundly immersed in bodies, nor [otherwise] participant of a partial condition, — *then*, associating intimately with the Soul of the World, they easily dominate the Universe. Wherefore it is not evil for the Soul in a certain respect to confer both existence and the power of well-being on the body—since every forethought for the benefit of inferior natures does not prevent the Benefactor from preserving his own superior condition. The providential care of the Universe is two-fold—one universal, which adorns all things with a serene power and a regal government; the other particular, which operates as it were by manual labor, contaminating the worker with the defilements of his work. Meanwhile the Divine Soul perpetually rules the Universe in a mode surpassing an inferior nature; and, transmitting an ultimate power into that which is subordinate nullifies the notion that Divinity placed the Universal Soul in that which is base. Moreover, the Soul will not naturally be deprived of this privilege since it had it from eternity and will perpetually have it, as it is something congenial to its essence, and is always present to it (the World), never having had a temporal beginning. Plato also says that the souls of the stars bear the same relation to their bodies as the Universal Soul—for he considers their bodies as revolving according to the circulations of Soul—and he accords to them a felicity ap-

propriate to their natures. He especially condemns the connexion of Soul with body for two reasons: 1. It is an obstacle to its intellectual energies. 2. It fills the soul with a herd of pernicious pleasures, desires and griefs. None of these can befall a soul which has neither immersed itself in body, nor passed into a partial condition. On the contrary, an undefiled soul becomes connected with a body which is neither indigent nor defective; which neither fills it with desires or fears, nor endangers its felicity. No occupation that concerns itself with inferior things can attract the Soul from the superior and felicitous contemplation [which it enjoys], but it eternally dwells with divine natures, and likewise beautifies the Universe with [the exercise of] a serene potency.

III. We will now discuss the human soul which is said to suffer every evil in the body, and to be miserable midst sorrows, desires, fears and other maladies—to which the body is a bond and a sepulchre, and the world a cave and a den These opinions are not discordant, since the same thing does not cause the descent of every soul. Every intellect abides in the place of intelligence [intellection], total and universal, which we denominate the Intelligible World—in which intellectual powers and individual intellects are contained [comprehended] for there is not one intellect alone, but one and many. Wherefore it is requisite that there be one [universal] Soul and many individual and different souls—like species from one genus—some of which are better, others worse; some more intellectual; others inferior in intellectual energy. For there, in Intellect, one intellect comprehends others in capacity, like a great animal; some are in energy, while each contains the other in capacity. Just as if an animated city was comprehensive of other living beings—as, in such a case, the Soul of the city would be more perfect and powerful than the rest, and still nothing would hinder the subordinate souls from being of the same essence as the superior. Or, as if from total fire there should be produced both a great and a diminutive fire—while every intermediate fire would proceed from total fire, or rather from its source.

The work of the more rational soul is intellection but not

intellection alone, since, otherwise, how would it differ from Intellect? As it receives something else besides intellectuality, through which it obtains its distinctive hypostasis, it does not remain intellect alone. It has its appropriate labor, since everything which ranks in the order of beings is assigned its proper work.

Surveying things prior to itself it apprehends; contemplating itself it preserves the integrity of its essence—and, inclining to that which is subordinate to itself it beautifies, regulates and rules it. For it is impossible that all things in the Intelligible Sphere should be inactive—the power existing there to generate beings consecutively — which power, though inferior in strength, will necessarily exist as long as that which is prior to it.

IV. Individual souls, therefore, that use an intellectual organon in a conversion to their Original, and have a power to benefit inferior natures—just as light emanates from the Sun and unenvyingly imparts its illuminations—will be free from care and sorrow while they abide with the Universal Soul in the Intelligible World. Moreover, in the celestial region they aid the Universal Soul in governing (the World), as if they were other Kings associating with the Ruler of all things and becoming his colleagues—neither he nor they descending from their regal abodes. However, when souls pass from the Universal Soul to a partial condition and become as individuals, as if weary of dwelling with another, then each one concerns itself with its own particular affairs. When, therefore, any individual soul acts separately and for itself for any length of time, flying from the Whole, and revolting from it by a certain [factitious] difference, incapable of beholding an intelligible nature through having become a part, *then* it becomes solitary, impotent, and distracted with cares—since it now looks to a part, and, being divulsed from the Universal, attaches itself to one particular nature, avoiding everything else. Hence, coming hither and converting itself to that which is partial, and being spurned by total and universal natures, it [necessarily] departs from the Whole, and regulates its partial affairs amidst

its unhappy surroundings—grasping and serving externals, and being present to, and profoundly immersed within, them. Wherefore there happens a defluxion of the soul's wings, and she becomes fettered with corporeal bonds—having abandoned the innoxious work of governing a superior nature, which it performed while with the Universal Soul.

Intellect which is prior to the psychical nature is far more beneficial [than it] to the soul that ascends to it. The soul, therefore, that lapses from on high is fettered by body and uses the sensuous energies, as her intellectual powers are temporarily manacled. She is also said to be entombed and confined in a cave, but when she converts herself to Intelligence [to the Intelligible] she loosens her fetters and ascends on high—receiving from Reminiscence, in the beginning of her ascent, the power to contemplate Real Being, for it always possesses something supersensuous. Souls, therefore, are necessarily of a two-fold nature, and alternately experience superior and inferior states of existence. The more they are able to associate with Intellect the longer they abide in the Intelligible World—when they lack this ability, through either nature or fortunes, they linger in the Sphere of Sense. This is what Plato occultly indicates when he distributes souls from the Second [mixture in the] Crater, and makes them parts; declaring that it was necessary that they should fall into generation after they were thus separated into parts. When he says that the Demiurgus sowed them [into generation], we must interpret him in the same way as when he introduces the Demiurgus speaking [to the junior gods]. For whatever is in the nature of the Whole this the hypothesis generates for the purpose of unfolding things that are eternally generated and perpetually becoming.

V. The assertions, therefore, are not in reality discordant which declare that souls are sown into generation; that they descend to contribute to the perfection of the Universe; that they are condemned to suffer punishment, are incarcerated in a cave, and possess both necessary and voluntary motions, since necessity comprehends the voluntary in its nature; and that the soul is in evil when in body. Neither are the flight

and wandering of Empedocles from deity, and guilt and consequent punishment; the rest of Heraclitus in his flight, and the voluntary and involuntary modes of descent, contrary to the truth. Everything voluntarily descends to an inferior condition; and, proceeding according to its peculiar motion, and simultaneously suffering contact with subordinate things, it is said to be punished for its conduct—and thus to experience these things and to act is necessary to [fulfill] the eternal law of nature. However, if any one asserts that the descent from above occurs for the benefit of another, and that therefore it was divinely caused, he will neither deviate from the truth nor himself—for the extremes are referred to the principle from which the intervening particulars came, though there are many intermediates. Moreover, the guilt is two-fold—one part existing in the cause of descent, and the other in the commission of evil here—and hence the soul suffers doubly. An immersion into other bodies is the more lenient punishment, and this being swiftly inflicted through an equitable decision, pronounced according to a divine ordinance, is denominated a "judgment." Excessive evil is rightly considered as meriting a more severe punishment, viz: a subjection to the power of avenging demons. Thus the soul, though of divine origin and formerly an inhabitant of the Intelligible Sphere, becomes profoundly immersed in body; and, being [essentially] an inferior divinity, voluntarily descends hither, both for the sake of power and of beautifying terrestrial things. Wherefore, if it swiftly flies from this place it will suffer no [permanent] injury from having come here, since it has acquired a knowledge of evil, developed its latent faculties, and exhibited works and acts which if it had perpetually abided in an incorporeal region, and had never become sensuously energetic, would have been bestowed on it in vain. Moreover, the soul would have been ignorant of what she (potentially) possesses if her powers had always remained dormant and concealed; since *energy* everywhere demonstrates the existence of power which would otherwise be entirely unknown, and, as it were, destitute of reality as it would lack true being. Even now every one admires the internal powers

of the soul through the wonderful variety of her outward acts, judging the excellence of the former from the beauty of the latter.

VI. It is necessary that the One alone should not exist, for, in this case, all things would be hidden in it and not possess a distinctive form; neither would any being truly exist as it would be comprehended in the One; nor would a multitude of these beings be generated from the One unless some of them that were successively produced were allotted the psychical rank. Similarly, it is requisite that souls do not exist alone, but that their works should perspicuously appear—since each nature has the power to produce and exhibit some inferior to itself—these things proceeding, as it were, from an indivisible principle and seed to a sensible end; while that which is prior always abides in its native seat. That which is processive is generated from an ineffable power, such as is inherent in superior beings; which power it is not right should be sterile and, as it were, circumscribed by envy, but should perpetually proceed even to the last of things, since a cause of inexhaustible power ought to be universally diffused, and not leave anything destitute of the effects of its energy. There is nothing which prevents all things from participating of the Good to the degree that their natures are receptive. Either the nature of matter is eternal, and it is therefore impossible that it should not participate of the good which is common to all, so far as each is capable of receiving it—or the generation of matter was of necessity from causes prior to it, and it is not right that matter through its imbecility should lose the benefits flowing from its superior, as if a beneficent cause restricted its goodness. Wherefore that which is most beautiful in the World of Sense is a [mere] representation of the best in the Intelligible Natures, viz: their power and goodness. All things, both intelligible and sensible, are connected—the former existing *per se*, and the latter perpetually receiving being from the participation of intelligibles, and imitating them according to their respective capacities.

VII. Nature being two-fold—one intelligible, the other sen-

sible—it is better for the soul to remain in the Intelligible Sphere, but necessary on account of its peculiar essence that it should participate of [experience] the World of Sense. Nor should it be discontented because it does not wholly possess the characteristics of Absolute Being, since it obtains a mediate rank, having a divine allotment though placed in the ultimate gradations of an intelligible nature. It partakes, as it were, of a sensuous nature, imparting something to it, and in return receiving something from it, unless preserving its purity it *only* governs sense—since through intense desire it becomes merged in matter and does not totally abide with the Universal Soul. Nevertheless, our souls are able to again ascend, having the benefit of their sensuous experience, through which they will learn what true felicity there is in the Intelligible World, and by a comparison of the different conditions of existence will more clearly perceive the superiority of the intellectual life. For the experience of evil produces a more distinct knowledge of good, especially among those in whom the faculty of judgment is so imbecile that they cannot otherwise obtain the knowledge of evil. As therefore the exercise of a rational discursive energy is [practically] a descent to a ultimate and inferior condition, for it cannot ascend to Absolute Being, hence it is necessary that energizing from itself, not being able to remain self-concentrated, it should by a law of Nature proceed as far as Soul, as this is an end to its progression; and that which is successive to Soul becomes also an end to its energies. This is the energy of Soul, viz: a conversion to inferior things and a reversion to those more excellent by a contemplation of beings. These movements are made by, (1) participating of time and a partial condition; (2) by an ascent from lower to higher natures. But the Soul of the World should never be engaged in inferior work; and, being impassive to evil, ought to behold subordinate things by external contemplation—and, at the same time, perpetually abide with beings prior to itself. This two-fold work it can accomplish simultaneously, receiving from prior natures and dispensing to subordinate—since it is impossible, from the psychical nature, that

it should not be conjoined to both prior and ultimate beings.

VIII. To speak plainly and boldly my opinion, though it differs from the notions of others, I must say that the whole of our soul does not enter the body, but that something of it perpetually abides in the Intelligible World and a part in the World of Sense. Moreover, that if the part in the sensible world conquers, or rather if it is conquered and disturbed, it does not permit us to perceive what the supreme part of the soul contemplates — since that which is understood comes to us when it descends within the apprehension of Sense. We do not know anything that happens to either part of the soul until it reaches the Whole of the soul. In the same manner as desire which abides in the concupiscible part of the soul is known by us when, either by an intimate sensitive or cogitative power, or by both, we apprehend its existence. Every soul has something which tends downward to body, and something which aspires upward to intellect—and the Soul of the Universe, through its part which inclines to body, rules the Whole without labor, surpassing (in excellence) that which it dominates. For its operations are not (conducted) like ours through the energy of discursive reason, but through intellect, similarly as art acts without deliberation; and therefore by her inferior part Universal Soul governs the whole. Individual and partial souls have also a superior faculty, but they are troubled and agitated by Sense and a fear of many preternatural occurrences, causing grief and anxiety; for the object of their care is a defective (imbecile) part which is environed by numerous alien things, filled with a multitude of desires, and, moreover, vanquished by the [puerile] enticements of pleasure. The supreme part of the soul lacks and holds in contempt sensual and transient delights, and its course of life is uniform.

ON THE ESSENCE OF SOUL.

(Lib. 2., Enn. 4.)

I. In investigating the essence of Soul, if we show that it is neither body, nor the harmony in incorporeal natures; and likewise, if we omit what is said of it being the *entelecheia* or perfection of the body as not true, as the words [taken literally] imply, and as not manifesting what the Soul is; and if we should say that it has an intelligible nature, and a divine allotment, perhaps we shall assert something perspicuous concerning it. At the same time, however, it will be better to say something more,—wherefore we shall make a division into a sensible and intelligible nature, and place Soul in the intelligible. Hence, let it be ranked among Intelligibles; and let us in another way investigate that which is proximate to, or the peculiarity of, its nature. Therefore, some things must be considered as primarily partible, and in their own nature dissipable; these are such as have no part the same, either as another part, or as the whole; and in which it is necessary that the part should be less than all and the whole. These, however, are sensible magnitudes and masses, each of which has an appropriate place, nor is it possible that one of these should be in many places at once. But there is another essence opposed to this, which in no respect admits of a separation into parts, since it lacks parts, and is therefore impartible. It likewise admits of no interval, not even in conception, nor is indigent of place, nor is generated in a certain being—either according to parts, or according to wholes—because it is, as it were, at one and the same time carried in all beings as in a vehicle; not in order that it may be established in them, but because other things are neither able nor willing to exist without it. It like-

wise possesses an essence which subsists according to sameness, and is the foundation of all successive natures, being as it were a centre in a circle, the lines drawn from which and terminating in the circumference, nevertheless permit it to abide in itself. For they possess from the centre their generation and being, participate of the point, and their principle is that which is impartible. They also proceed, being attached to the centre. This, therefore, [of which the centre in a circle is an image] being primarily impartible in intelligibles, and the leader among beings, and again that which is in sensibles being totally partible,—this being the case, prior to that which is sensible, but which nevertheless is something near to and in it, there is another certain nature, which is partible indeed, yet not primarily so like bodies, but becomes partible in bodies. Hence, when bodies are divided, the form which is in them is also divided, though it still remains a whole in each of the divided parts; the same thing in this case becoming many, each of which is perfectly distant from the other, in consequence of the form becoming entirely partible. Of this kind are colors, and all qualities, and each species, which is capable of being wholly at one and the same time in many things, that are separated from each other, and which has no part experiencing the same thing with another part. Hence this must be admitted to be wholly partible.

Moreover, besides the nature which is perfectly indivisible, there is another essence proximately suspended from it, and which has indeed from it the impartible, but by a progression thence, hastening to another nature, is established in the middle of both, viz: between that which is impartible and primary, and that which is impartible and primary, and that which is divisible about, and inherent in, bodies. This nature does not subsist similarly to color and every quality, which are indeed everywhere the same in many masses of bodies, yet the quality which is in one mass is entirely separate from the quality in another, so far as one mass is also separate from another. And though the magnitude should be one, yet the identical in each part utterly lacks a communion sufficient to produce co-pas-

sivity, because this identity is at the same time attended with [a predominant] difference. For the identity is passion, and is not itself also essence. That, however, in this mediate nature which accedes to an impartible essence, is itself essence, and is ingenerated in bodies, about which also it happens to be divided; yet it does not experience this, till it gives itself to them. When, therefore, it is inherent in bodies, though it should be inherent in the greatest body, which is everywhere most extended, yet the giving of itself to the whole is not a departure from the unity of its nature. Still it is not one in the same manner as body. For body is one by continuity, but one part of it is different from another, and is situated in a different place. Nor again is it one in the same manner as one quality. The nature, however, which is at once partible and impartible, and which is soul, is not one like that which is continued, having another and another part; but it is partible indeed, because it is in all the parts of that in which it subsists; and impartible, because the whole of it is in all, and likewise in each, of the parts. He, therefore, who perceives this, and beholds the power of it, will know what a divine and admirable thing Soul is, and that it possesses a supernatural essence; not indeed having magnitude, but being present with all magnitude, and existing in this place, and again not existing in it, and this not by a different but the same nature. Wherefore it is divided into parts, and again not divided; or rather, it is neither divided nor generated divisible—for it remains a whole within itself. But it is divided about bodies, because bodies in consequence of their essential partibility cannot receive it impartibly. Wherefore the distribution into parts is the passion of bodies and not of Soul.

II. It is requisite, however, that the nature of Soul should be a thing of this kind [i. e., a mediate]—since it is impossible for soul to be anything besides this, being neither alone impartible, nor alone partible—and that it is necessarily after this manner both of these is manifest from the following considerations: If it was like bodies having another and another part, when one part suffered another would not be sensible of the

suffering, but that soul, for instance, which is in the finger, would have a sensation of the passion, as being different, and existing in itself. In short, there would be many souls governing each of us. One soul, likewise, would not govern this Universe, but an infinite number of souls separate from each other. As regards what is said about continuity, unless it contributes to unity, it is introduced in vain—since that which is asserted by some, (who deceive themselves), is not to be admitted, viz: that the senses gradually arrive at the ruling part by a continued succession. In the first place. therefore, the assertion that 'the senses arrive at the ruling part of the soul' is made without examination. For how do they divide, and assert *this* to be one thing, but *that* another, and the ruling part something else? By how much quantity, also, do they divide each of these; or by what difference, the quality being one, and the bulk continued? Moreover, is the ruling part alone sentient, or have the other parts also a sensible perception? If this is the case with the ruling part alone, it will then perceive, when the sensible passion falls on this part established in a certain place; but if it falls on another part of the soul, which is not naturally adapted to be sentient, this part will not deliver the same passion to the ruling part, nor, in short, will there be sensation. If, also, the sensible passion falls on the ruling part, it will either fall on a part of it, and this being sentient, the remaining parts will no longer be sensitive, since it would be in vain; or there will be many and infinite sensible perceptions, and all of them will be dissimilar. Hence, one sensible perception will say, I primarily suffer; but another will say, I perceive the passion of another sense. Each sensation, likewise, except the first, will be ignorant where the passion was generated. Or each part of the soul will be deceived, fancying that the passion was there generated where it is. If, however, not only the ruling part but any other has a sensible perception, why will this part be the leader, but another not? Again, why is it necessary that sensation should arrive at the ruling part? How, likewise, will the sensations arising from many senses, such as the ears and eyes, know one particular thing?

Moreover, if the soul is entirely one, so as to be perfectly impartible and one in itself; and if it entirely flies from the nature of multitude and partibility, no body which may participate of the soul will be wholly animated; but the soul establishing itself, as it were, about the centre of each, will leave all the bulk of the animal without animation. Hence it is necessary that soul should be thus one and many, partible and at the same time impartible; and we should not disbelieve that it is impossible for one and the same thing to be in many places at once. Unless we admit this, there will not be a nature which connects and governs all things—and which at once comprehends all things, and conducts them by wisdom. And this nature is indeed multitude, because beings are many; but it is also one, in order that the nature which comprehends may be one. By its multitudinous one, therefore, it supplies all the parts of body with life; and by its impartible one it conducts all things wisely. In those things, however, which are deprived of wisdom, that which is the leading one imitates this one of the soul. Hence, this is the meaning of what is divinely, though obscurely, asserted by Plato, viz: that from an essence impartible and always existing according to sameness, and from an essence divisible about bodies, the Demiurgus mingled a third species of essence from both. Soul, therefore, is after this manner one and many; the forms in bodies are many and one; bodies are many only; and the Supreme is One alone.

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